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ponents to force back the forearm of the other. In conversation the Mundurucú refrain from personal comparisons and moral judgments, and it is difficult for the outsider even to find out who collects the most rubber.

PROPERTY AND DISTRIBUTION

Rights to the use of natural resources are held by the community as an entity. New residents or visitors in a village are free, however, to hunt and fish where they please, and may clear garden land if they plan to remain long enough to reap the harvest. There are no fixed village territories, but villages are too far apart for hunting rights to overlap. It sometimes happens, however, that the men of one village chase a herd of wild pigs into the immediate environs of another. On such occasions the animals are pursued and killed by the hunters, but the men of the other village are usually notified and invited to join the hunt. Also, a traveler is free to kill game along the trail wherever he may be.

Gardens are held only by usufruct rights; when the land is exhausted after two years it reverts to the common domain. The yield of gardens, hunting, and fishing are considered the property of the person who owns the garden or made the kill. But these rights lose significance when seen in the light of the distribution system. Any food that comes into the household is shared by the extended family, and if there is a surplus it is distributed to all the households in the village. No one person or family can go hungry if others have food; to refuse a request for food is unheard of among the savannah Mundurucú and would be regarded as utterly reprehensible.

Private property is restricted to tools, utensils, ornaments, wearing apparel, and other portable items. The average man owns one or two bows and a quantity of arrows of various types, and a very few own muzzle-loading

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greatest protection from the weather. Other men, first of the same clan and then of the same phratry, hang their hammocks adjacent to these older men, but the boys and adolescents are expected to sleep in the less favored forward part of the eksá whatever their lineal affiliations. This is less a violation of clan unity than an affirmation of the prestige accorded to age in Mundurucú society.

The men's house is the single most important institution in the structuring of male activity. It serves as an informal forum in which plans are discussed and decisions made, and each man interacts with every other man to a greater extent within its precincts than if the village were organized strictly along extended family lines. The men generally take their first meal of the day in the men's house, shortly after dawn, and set out from there in groups for the day's hunt. On their return to the village, they leave their kill with their wives and then go to bathe. They return from the stream to the men's house and there relax in their hammocks until all have returned and the evening repast is ready. Some pass their time while waiting in making baskets, bows, arrows, and other items. When the food is cooked, a younger member of each household goes to the house to bring its contribution to the communal meal. A loud shout goes up to call in the stragglers, and all gather about the pots. The oldest help themselves first, and second choice is given to the boys. After the evening meal, the occupants of the eksá lie in their hammocks and converse; most fall asleep soon after night falls.

The emphasis on coöperation between the men transcends the practical necessities of Mundurucú ecological adaptation, and it is looked upon as good and valued behavior in itself. No man refuses an invitation to take part in garden breaking, for, not only will he one day expect reciprocity, but to refuse would be to disassociate himself

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571 males is extremely close knit and is probably the most co-
578 hesive group in Mundurucú society. Such is the emotional
592 bond between the women of these groups that I know of
[762] one who committed suicide because of alienation from her two sisters and house mates. But beyond the extended family, conflicts between individual women or households are common. All women of the household generally join with a member in her antipathy for another woman or household; this, of course, follows from the fact that the housemates are closely related to each other, which complements the allegiance arising from co-residence.

• 521 Hostility between the women generally takes the form
578 of malicious gossip. My wife, Yolanda, was the recipient of most of the confidences that passed among the women,
[123] which constituted one of our most valuable sources of information. Coleta, an Indian girl who lived in our house
[115] and worked for us, used to regale Yolanda by the hour with tales of adultery and of the promiscuity of certain women. Coleta was an excellent source of such data, as she herself was well known for waywardness in affairs of the heart. And we usually managed to learn by this means of the well-repressed hostilities in the village, of fears and accusations of sorcery, and in general of relations between the sexes. Yolanda's participation in the gossip network brought her even closer to the women, and they, in turn, gossiped about her. One of the favored places for the exchange of female information and opinion was the shed where farinha was made. The women usually chatted animatedly as they worked there, but as soon as one left the group, the heads of the others drew together and she was thoroughly discussed; after a couple of months of residence in the village, the same thing happened, as we had no difficulty finding out, when Yolanda left their midst. Gossip is the chief form of expression of antagonism among

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the women, but occasionally spiteful remarks are exchanged or a hair-pulling match, usually over a man, occurs. These events provide the grist for conversation for weeks.

Relations between the women of the savannah communities are subjected to an extra, situational strain because of an unequal ratio of the sexes. In the village of Cabruá, for example, there were thirteen mature men and eighteen women; the five unattached females constituted a serious threat to the married women, for they seduced many of the husbands and attempted to induce them to leave their wives. The disproportion between the sexes is promoted by the greater mobility of the male and the structure of savannah-Cururú relations. Young *campineiros* sometimes wander into the Cururú River villages, marry there and settle according to the matrilocal pattern. But fear of witchcraft and long distances from rubber-producing areas inhibit the reverse from taking place. The result is a shortage of husbands in the savannahs and a dearth of wives on the Cururú. Jealousy over sex is rife among savannah women, and mutual hostilities are structured by the support given by the matrilocal extended family.

The nuclear family is not an important social unit in the savannah villages, although it is basic to life in the rubber season, when village and extended family break up to exploit the scattered resource. But during the eight to nine months of annual residence in the villages, the nuclear family has few vital functions. The men's house prevents it from being a consumption unit in the subsistence economy and from being even a co-resident group. And the thoroughgoing division of labor between the sexes delivers the nuclear family from any primary responsibility in the processes of production. Husband and wife occa-